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ABSTRACT

The instructional concept guide is part of a system developed for tutor training and support. It is primarily designed for volunteers, but it can also be adapted to the training of paraprofessional tutors for any type of adult literacy program. A key component in the system is the Tutor Support Library, consisting of Instructional Concept Guides (training and reference aids for tutors) and Functional Content Units (models for the practical application of tutoring skills). Guide Five suggests concerns and procedures involved in evaluating and modifying the services of an adult literacy agency using volunteer tutors. Assessment and developmental procedures related to program purposes, organizational structure, facilities, staff, tutors, students, and the community are discussed. Included are numerous data collection forms and charts for the evaluation and summary process. (Author/MS)

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TUTOR SUPPORT LIBRARY

Instructional Concept Guide No. 5

PROCESS AND PRODUCT

A Guide for Assessment
Of Community Tutoring Programs

by

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CE 006 754

PROCESS AND PRODUCT

A Guide for Assessment of Community Tutoring Programs

Students come to an adult literacy tutoring agency with very real and specific needs. The agency must be ready with personnel, organization, and materials to assess and serve these student needs. Publications such as Leader, prepared and distributed by Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc., are available to help in the initiation and development of an agency. However, guidelines for the evaluation of services are also needed. This Guide suggests concerns and procedures involved in evaluating and modifying the services of an adult literacy agency using volunteer tutors.

Consideration of each separate aspect of the operation is of primary importance. In most programs, evaluation should include the agency's purposes, organization, facilities, staff, materials, tutors, students, community served, and even the assessment procedures themselves. This Guide includes discussion, data collection forms, and charts for the evaluation and summary process. Working through the total assessment process should provide the information needed to determine how your agency compares with the recommendations in program development manuals such as Leader and other publications in the RALSU TUTOR SUPPORT LIBRARY.

Evaluating exactly what your agency is accomplishing is basic

to efficiency. Therefore, it should be done not only as you begin, but consistently throughout the agency's existence. Assessment forms the basis for planning tutoring activities; and should similarly form the basis for planning and modification at the agency level. The concepts of diagnosis and prescription are vital in the use of evaluation data.

> Diagnosis: Use of evaluation information to determine areas of strength and weakness in meeting ultimate program goals and purposes.
>
> Prescription: Adjustments and changes, based on information learned through the assessment procedures, provide the basis for doing a better job in the future.

For direction in diagnosis see the chart, General Evaluation Checklist for Administrators and Staff. Part A provides guidance in summarizing information on "History and Status" of organizational development and purposes. Part B, "Current Operations, and Future Expectations," deals with the collection of evaluation information on present program operation and plans. After establishing a base line, a plan should then be constructed that will insure consistent and continuing evaluation of agency operation and student achievement. This plan should have input from everyone involved --- staff, tutors, students, and community.

Program Purposes

The primary goal of any program is to equip the student with the literacy tools needed for his personal goals. In addition,

GENERAL EVALUATION CHECKLIST FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF

A. History and Status

Purposes	Organization	Facility
YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO
1. Does your agency have stated aims, objectives or philosophy?	1. Can you write a brief statement describing your agency's organizational pattern?	1. Can you describe the physical facilities used by your agency?
2. If so, can you list four objectives of your agency (in order of importance)?	2. Are you aware of communication patterns in the line staff positions?	2. Can you compare the relative usefulness and cost of instructional materials in your agency?
3. If you have no such statement, can your director and staff prepare a set of current overall objectives?	3. Can you draw a model of the agency's organizational pattern?	3. Can you make a statement about special equipment used in your agency?

GENERAL EVALUATION CHECKLIST FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF

B. Current Operation and Future Expectation

Staff	Tutors	Students	Community
YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO
1. Can you list job titles and the tasks they require in your agency?	1. Can you state requirements for tutors entering your agency program?	1. Can you describe current make-up of the students in your program?	1. Does your community have specific tutoring needs (such as bilingual populations, job relocation markets)?
2. Can you list the people on your staff and their current assignments?	2. Can you describe the agency's training program for tutors?	2. Do students have an opportunity for self-evaluation?	2. Is your community adequately aware of this agency?
3. Can you make a statement about the experiences, performance level, and general attitude of each staff member in the agency?	3. Are tutors given opportunities for self-evaluation as well as for evaluation of the agency program?	3. Do students have a chance to communicate their feelings about the tutoring program and the agency in general?	3. Does your community view this agency as capable of meeting the stated objectives?

an essential subcomponent of the primary goal is to help the student in the quickest, most efficient way possible.

How can an agency tell if it is efficiently helping students apply the skills learned in tutoring sessions to real-life situations at home and at work? Is there sufficient consideration of the time element involved in reaching goals? Time, after all, is of supreme importance to the adult student. (Indeed, many who come to literacy agencies already fear that "time may have run out" for them.)

The starting point must be the agency's stated purposes. The fact that these purposes (or goals) are the heart, so to speak, of the agency cannot be overemphasized. General strengths or weaknesses of an agency are assessed by examining each working component within the broad framework of agency purposes.

Note carefully the "Purposes" columns on both instruments, General Evaluation Checklist, Part A and Guided Questionnaire for Basic Descriptive Information: Part I. These questions and their answers are the key to the entire evaluation plan. They serve as a criterion for every other agency operation covered in the evaluation. For example:

1) Does the organizational scheme of our agency adequately fit, augment, or deter its stated purposes?

2) Do the facilities of our agency fit, augment, or deter its stated purposes?

This process should be followed for each category of agency operation. This is an active, positive approach since it requires agency

administrators and staff to make specific statements in response to fit a particular organization, the overall patterns suggested in these two instruments should be maintained.

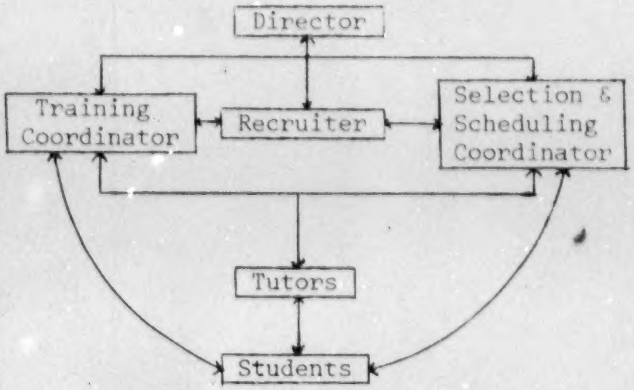
Organizational Structure

The organization of the tutoring agency must be based directly upon the stated purposes of the agency if it is to perform well. The performance of the agency will be controlled by the relationship between its purposes and the organization it has developed to carry them out.

For example, the rules which govern the selection of administrators and staff will be an important factor in determining the authority of a given staff member. A chart of the staff organization displayed beside a listing of staff personnel, including their qualifications, experience, and current assignments, gives a realistic picture of the current situation. It can also aid in planning and "prescribing" future task assignments for individual staff members as well as tasks for the organization as a whole. Many times the agency administration is simply not aware, in the context of total agancy demands, of the qualifications and expertise already available in its staff. Likewise, areas in which staff development is needed may be overlooked if agency assessment is either too global or is limited to product assessment without careful evaluation of the process.

GUIDED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BASIC DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Part 1

Purposes	Organization	Facilities
Refer to your agency's statement of aims and objectives* and list the top 4 priorities (in your agency) in order of importance. Funding?	Describe your organization and draw a model to demonstrate. Example:  Explain how your agency helps communication flow "up and down" (from director to staff to tutors to students, and then in reverse order.	Describe your agency's physical plant: 1) size 2) location 3) allocation of space 4) attractiveness 5) accessibility to tutors and students What basic materials and equipment are at your disposal? From what sources? 1) Which are most useful? 2) What is the cost of each? Material and/or Equipment — Usefulness — Cost 1. 2. 3. Consider such factors as: 1) student interest 2) skills included 3) portability 4) durability 5) attractiveness

* If you have no such statement of purposes, constructing such a statement should be Task #1.

GUIDED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BASIC DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Part 2

Staff	Tutors	Students	Community
List titles and job descriptions of all positions in your agency. (That is, what are the jobs that must be done for the agency to operate well? List the people on your staff and describe their jobs. On a scale of 1 to 5, evaluate each of the people in terms of: 1) how well they carry out tasks expected of them. 2) their awareness of those tasks. (Have you told them what is expected of them?) 3) their need and/or willingness for additional training	Describe entrance requirements for your tutors Describe your agency's training program. State opportunities given for tutor self-evaluation, tutor evaluation of the agency, and tutor recognition of success.	Describe general characteristics, functioning levels and range of students in your agency. Describe agency policy for assigning tutors and students. State opportunities given students for self-evaluation of tutors, the agency, materials movement in the program and recognition of progress.	Describe specific community needs related to the agency. 1) bilingual population 2) job relocation market 3) any characteristic which might increase the potential pool of students in general or of a specialized nature How does the community view the agency? 1) Is it aware of the agency? 2) Does it have confidence in the agency's ability to meet needs? 3) Does the community feel ties to support the agency with manpower and/or finances?

Facilities

Few agencies are fortunate enough to be able to design their facilities to individual specifications. However, most physical facilities can be modified to suit the need. Again, it is important that the building itself, as well as modification plans, be examined in the light of the overall purposes and specific goals of the agency. Broad assessment factors include:

1) Is the location feasibile?

2) Is it accessible to the students to be served?

3) Do the tutors, as well as the general community, like the location?

4) Does the facility reflect an appropriate comfort and learning atmosphere?

It is also necessary to carefully assess whether or not funds for equipment and materials are being used judiciously. For example, materials and equipment that are useful to only selected students because of limited interest, difficulty level, or type of language should be carefully evaluated for potential benefits. Other factors to consider are:

1) Are the items durably constructed?

2) Do they store easily?

3) Can they be used for more than one purpose or student type?

4) Are materials easily understood by tutors?

5) Are materials stored in an arrangement related to student skill areas and easily understood by tutors?

6) Are materials easily accessible to tutors and students?

Teaching materials which are well-chosen and appropriately used, however, are a vital part of the agency's facilities. Tutors should be able to chose from a wide range of books and materials to match the individual student's needs. The student with a particular occupational goal, or the bilingual student, will require very specific materials. Evaluation techniques, then, should also include relating these needs to funds available for materials. (See Instructional Concept Guide No. 11, "Resources: A Guide for Using Published Materials in Adult Literacy Programs," for additional help in evaluating instructional materials.)

Staff

The term "staff" includes the workers in the agency who direct, administer, and coordinate the overall operation of the agency. These individuals must have a clear idea of what the agency hopes to accomplish if the program is to be successful. To achieve maximum success, the staff should participate in discussing and considering possible goals as well as in actual goal-setting whenever possible.

A systematic means of collecting information from the staff should be used. A checklist type of questionnaire is effective.

The Staff Questionnaire Form that follows provides information on attitudes of the staff as well as on the current status of staff operation.

Tutors

How does a tutor come to be a tutor? More important, how does a tutor come to be an enthusiastic, innovative, effective tutor? What part do agency purposes, organization, facility/materials, tutor training, and staff play in the selection and success of the tutor?

The importance of carefully assessing the selection, training, and performance of the tutor is obvious, since the tutor is the pivotal point of a student's relationship with the agency. The student who views his tutor as uninterested, unprepared, and uncommitted is a likely drop-out candidate. Time, energy, and money spent on effective training of tutors will reduce both tutor and student drop-out rate.

How, then, does an agency assess what it is currently doing and what it might do in the future to select and train tutors? The Tutor Questionnaire gives an indication of the point of view of a working tutor as well as agency-wide attitudes toward tutor preparation. It also indicates feelings about the degree of communication within the program. This form might be used effectively after tutors have completed training and two or three initial tutoring sessions. The resulting information will provide direction for

planning follow-up training sessions and individual conferences with tutors at the same time assessment data is collected.

Again, it may be necessary to develop additional assessment measures that apply to your program specifically. But the questionnaire and checklist that follow are appropriate beginnings for most volunteer tutoring programs.

Students

That first step, contacting the tutoring agency, is usually difficult for a prospective student. Therefore the agency should look closely at its purposes, prospective students, and the general nature of its current student population so as to devise the best methods possible to cushion "first step shock." If the student takes that "first step" of contacting a tutoring agency, you can be sure he is asking for help. Before he commits himself, he has a right to know what the agency considers its goal to be. The student has also a right (and the agency has an obligation) to expect that the agency's stated goals and the activities that go on at the agency are directed toward the same point.

Examine how well your agency's words and deeds match. Is it easy for a student to communicate with his tutor and with agency administration? Are adequate records kept on each student? Is the student encouraged to contribute to his record folder? Does he have the chance to do so? Is it possible for the student, in addition, to contribute a brief log or diary of his progress, problems, and

STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

Program _____
Representative _____

Directions: Put an "X" in the blank that best answers each question. Space is provided with each question for additional comments and information. Please add your comments, thoughts, ideas, and suggestions where appropriate, especially for those questions to which you have answered "No."

	YES	PARTIALLY	NO
1. Is the training program adequately preparing the tutors to teach the tutees to read?	___	___	___
Is it preparing the tutor to:			
A. assess the needs and interests of the tutees?	___	___	___
B. plan instruction appropriate to the identified needs?	___	___	___
C. select and utilize appropriate materials?	___	___	___
D. plan motivating and interesting activities?	___	___	___
E. keep records of the proceedings of the tutoring sessions?	___	___	___

Comments:

2. Are the available materials adequate to meet the needs of the tutors and the tutees?	___	___	___
A. Are they on the appropriate instructional level?	___	___	___
B. Is the content adult-oriented?	___	___	___

Comments:

STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

	YES	PARTIALLY	NO
3. Are the tutors and tutees meeting regularly?	___	___	___
A. Is the meeting place convenient for most of them?	___	___	___
B. Are the arranged times convenient?	___	___	___

Comments:

4. Do there seem to be any personality or communication problems between the tutors and the tutees?	___	___	___

Comments (please list any you have noticed):

5. Are the tutors keeping records of the tutoring sessions?	___	___	___

Comments:

6. Is there a supervisor or resource person available to answer the tutor's questions and help him solve any problems he may have?	___	___	___

Comments:

7. Does there seem to be enough communication between staff and tutors?	___	___	___
A. Are the staff members aware of the tutors' activities, lesson plans, and problems?	___	___	___
B. Do the tutors seem to be asking the staff questions when they arise?	___	___	___

Comments:

STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

	YES	PARTIALLY	NO
8. Do the tutors seem to share ideas and suggestions with each other?	___	___	___
Comments:			
9. Do the tutees seem to be making adequate progress with their reading skills?	___	___	___
Comments:			
10. Are there any specific problems or components of the program that should be revised in order to improve the program?	___	___	___

Please list these problems and any suggestions you may have for improvement:

1.

2.

3.

4.

TUTOR QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

Program _____
Tutor _____

Directions: Put an "X" in the blank that best answers each question. Space is provided with each question for additional comments and information. Please add your comments, thoughts, ideas, and suggestions where appropriate, especially for those questions to which you have answered "No."

	YES	PARTIALLY	NO
1. Did the training program adequately prepare you to instruct your tutee?	___	___	___
Did it prepare you to:			
A. know what kind of instruction your tutee needs?	___	___	___
B. know how to teach these needed skills?	___	___	___
C. know what materials to use and how to use them?	___	___	___
D. plan lessons?	___	___	___
E. plan interesting activities by providing you with suggestions?	___	___	___

Comments:

2. Are you keeping records of your tutoring sessions?	___	___	___

Comments:

3. Are the materials you are using adequate for teaching your tutee?	___	___	___
A. Do the materials provide instruction in the skills in which the tutee needs practice?	___	___	___
B. Does the tutee seem to be interested in the materials you are using?	___	___	___

Comments:

TUTOR QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

	YES	PARTIALLY	NO
4. Are you meeting regularly with your tutee?	___	___	___
A. Is the meeting place convenient for you?	___	___	___
B. Is the arranged time convenient?	___	___	___
Comments:			
5. Do you get along well with your tutee?	___	___	___
A. Do you feel comfortable with your tutee during the tutoring sessions?	___	___	___
B. Does the tutee ever make suggestions or give you ideas for planning lessons?	___	___	___
Comments:			
6. Do you feel that there is enough communication between you and the other members of the staff?	___	___	___
A. Do you have opportunities to ask questions to a supervisor or group leader about your lesson plans and your tutee's progress?	___	___	___
B. Are your questions about tutoring and lesson planning being answered adequately?	___	___	___
C. Do you have opportunities to share tutoring ideas with other tutors in the program?	___	___	___
Comments:			

TUTOR QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

	YES	PARTIALLY	NO
7. Do you think your tutee is progressing well with his reading instruction?	___	___	___

Comments:

8. Please list any suggestions that might help to make your tutoring experiences more productive and/or more enjoyable:

1.

2.

3.

4.

reactions? The Student Questionnaire or Interview Form which follows is useful for gathering input from students. In most cases, this form will be used as an interview guide by either a tutor or staff member. Only students clearly able to handle the reading difficulty of the form should be asked to complete it on their own. Another technique that could be used would be a group session to exchange ideas, with special emphasis on differences between views of the students and the viewing agency personnel on the goals of the organization. Using a tape recorder at such sessions is effective.

Community

Each community has specific needs. They are determined by the local social and occupational needs of the people who live in the community. If the tutoring agency is to have the community support it needs, the community must first be aware of the agency's existence. Second, there must be easy avenues of communication between the agency and the community.

Under any circumstances, the agency will have some type of image in the community. To a large degree, this image will rest on how well the agency has been able to produce results in relation to its goals. That is, the community's respect for the agency will reflect the assessment of the community. Does the community believe the agency can or does do what it proposes to do? This is an important question. The answer will bear directly on what the community is willing to give in moral, physical, and financial support.

Ideally, an agency would conduct in-depth interviews with members of the community to assess community awareness and confidence in the agency. Possibly lack of time, money, and expertise will preclude such a study, particularly on a continuing basis. However, discussion groups consisting of selected representative community members would be beneficial. Questionnaires submitted to randomly selected residents would also be helpful. Questions should include the community's view of:

1) The need for a tutoring agency.

2) Possibility of financial support.

3) Willingness to participate as trained tutors.

4) What the community expects to gain from such an agency.

5) Potential problems which an agency might encounter in this community.*

Summary

Now we come to the question of first, how an agency puts this information together, and second, how it can use the findings

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* A complete and highly useful discussion of a community-wide survey is found in Getting People to Read by Carl B. Smith and Leo C. Fay (New York: Dell, 1973; pp. 182-86). A "community reading inventory model," part of a multi-media kit entitled Sound and Light for the Right to Read, prepared by Virginia Mathews for the National Book Committee, is described. She lists twenty-one specific questions that might be asked in such a survey. If your agency is able to conduct a community assessment, this is an excellent source of additional guidance. The book is a widely available paperback costing only about $3.00. It may also be in your public library.

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE OR INTERVIEW FORM

Program _____
Student _____
Interviewer _____

Directions to the Interviewer: Read questions to student if necessary. Place an "X" in the appropriate blank for each question. Record comments made by student.

	YES	PARTIALLY	NO
1. Do you think your tutor is doing a good job of teaching you to read?	___	___	___
A. Are the activities he plans helping you to learn?	___	___	___
B. Does he explain directions and instructions clearly?	___	___	___
C. Does he plan activities that are interesting for you?	___	___	___

Comments:

2. Do you like the materials you are using in your tutoring sessions?	___	___	___
A. Are they too easy or too difficult?	___	___	___
B. Is the content meaningful?	___	___	___

Comments:

3. Have you been able to use any of the skills or information you have learned outside of the tutoring session?	___	___	___

Comments:

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE OR INTERVIEW FORM

	YES	PARTIALLY	NO
4. Have you been meeting with your tutor every week?	___	___	___
A. Do you have any difficulty getting to the meeting place?	___	___	___
B. Is the time convenient for you?	___	___	___

Comments:

5. Do you feel comfortable with your tutor during your tutoring sessions?	___	___	___
A. Is your tutor friendly?	___	___	___
B. Do you feel free to ask questions or tell him when you don't understand something?	___	___	___

Comments:

6. Are you pleased with the progress you are making in learning to read?	___	___	___

Comments:

7. Please give any suggestions or comments that might help to make your reading lessons more helpful or enjoyable:

1.

2.

3.

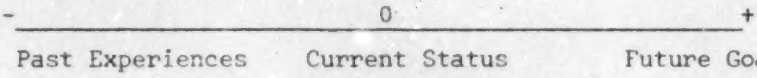
4.

to improve its activities. To begin, it must be reemphasized that this initial effort must become a continuing process. Unless the evaluation effort is continuous, it cannot expect to show real benefits. A hit-and-miss approach would be dishonest to all those involved and would certainly curtail the progress of the agency as a whole.

The information collected on the Staff, Tutor, and Student Questionnaires must be summarized in a usable form. A Summary Form: Components of a Volunteer Tutoring Program is provided for use in developing generalizations from the data collected. The Summary Form suggests questions which must be dealt with in assessing program organization, materials, and tutor training. Ideally, each staff member in the agency would review all information collected on the questionnaire forms. If this is not reasonable, due to time limitations, the program director might summarize the data citing information on the basic forms which should be looked at by all staff members. After each staff member has some awareness of the data collected, a staff development session in which the findings are reviewed should be scheduled. Understanding and consensus, relative to the status in each area of concern, should be the goals of such a session. The Guided Questionnaire which follows page 4 could serve as the agenda for such a staff review of program evaluation data.

In reviewing the information collected the staff must look at how this information relates to stated agency purposes. A second step is to assess the distance (and alternative routes) between current practice and desired condition. It might be helpful to consider your

agency (in each of the categories) as being on a continuum, or a "time line," so to speak. For example, in the category Materials, one might assess the inventory of equipment and materials (volumes, range, use) in three time slots:



In this way, it is possible to isolate one small segment of agency operation from the total program in order to make a more detailed examination. In a sense, it momentarily puts that one category under a microscope. Ultimately, of course, for true evaluation, the magnified category must be replaced in the total perspective of the program as a whole.

The final step in evaluation is development of a prescription. Using the assessments in each category, staff members must agree on direction and approach to program improvement. One method for this is the development of a goal statement in each area where program deficiencies are noted. Such goal statements should include the change desired, procedure to be utilized, individual(s) responsible, and deadline for achievement of modification. In addition to specific prescriptions for each area in which the program is found to be deficient, it is often helpful to assign priority ranks to each planned change. Care must be taken that the most vital needs receive the highest level of emphasis.

The last consideration in each round in the continuous assessment process will be identical to the first, namely, the people involved. In assessment, the equivalent of a "job well done" must be "How can we serve our people better?"

SUMMARY FORM: COMPONENTS OF A VOLUNTEER TUTORING PROGRAM

Check those items which are presently true of your program.

Program Organization

____ The objectives of the program are clearly stated and communicated to all participants.

____ The role of each participant is clearly defined.

____ The services of the organization are continually being publicized.

____ A continual volunteer recruiting program is being implemented.

____ There is continual evaluation with provisions made for program revision when needed.

____ The supervisors are in constant communication with the tutors and assist when problems arise.

____ Tutors are frequently given feedback and recognition for their efforts.

____ Tutors and tutees are matched with consideration of interests and workable skills needs/instructional experience combinations.

____ Tutors are notified about new materials and ideas for teaching activities.

Materials

____ The available materials can be used without special training.

____ Materials are available that cover a wide range of interests and instructional levels.

____ The materials contain vocabulary and subject matter which are currently appropriate.

____ Subject matter provides skills which aid in the mechanics of everyday living.

____ Manuals or written instructions are available to instruct the tutor in how to use the materials.

____ Materials are arranged in a manner which facilitates and encourages use by tutors and students.

____ Tutors are familiar with and knowledgeable about the use of available materials.

SUMMARY FORM: COMPONENTS OF A VOLUNTEER TUTORING PROGRAM

Tutor Training Program

____ instills confidence in the tutor's own ability to instruct his tutee.

____ explains the responsibilities and the expectations of the tutor role.

____ introduces and demonstrates several methods for teaching reading.

____ provides opportunites for the tutor to actively practice the techniques that are demonstrated.

____ prepares the tutor to assess the skill needs of his tutee.

____ teaches the tutor how to plan and schedule various activities for the individual tutoring sessions.

____ shows the tutor how to keep a log or record of his tutoring activities and the progress of his tutee.

____ introduces the tutor to the available materials and shows him how to select materials appropriate for his tutee.

____ provides the tutor with a detailed sequence of procedures to follow for at least his first tutoring session.

____ provides resource people, materials, and informal training sessions to assist the tutor after instruction has begun.

____ instills in the tutor the feeling that he is an integral part of the organization.

____ provides a manual for the tutor to use for future reference.